



The PSC Pulse

SINE DIE 2017



Sine Die is Latin for “without day” meaning “without any future date being designated—the assembly is adjourned”.

The 2017 session of the Georgia General Assembly is in the books as the lawmakers adjourned a half hour past midnight on Friday morning March 31, 2017 after 40 days in session. The drama of years past when the state’s budget would be passed on the final day was absent this year as both the House and Senate agreed to the budget and passed it on Day 37. However, many controversial bills were debated and passed or failed right up to the final minutes.

The legislature passed a campus carry gun bill on the final day, and expanded the illnesses for which patients can use medicinal THC oil or medical marijuana. Also gaining final passage was a bill to create a two-step process to permit petroleum pipelines in Georgia.

Continued on page 4



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Sine Die.....	1
Solar Ribbon Cutting.....	2
Commissioner meet with legislators.....	2
Saint Patrick's Day.....	3
Sine Die (continued).....	4
Consumers Affairs Corner.....	4
Commissioner Everett.....	5
Message from Human Resources.....	5
Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report.....	6
NARUC Meeting.....	6-7
Announcements.....	7
Calendar and Holidays.....	8

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Super Bowl LI
- Clean Energy in Georgia
- Echols Hosts Energy Assistance Workshops
- Chairman Wise Presents
- Plant Vogtle Tour
- Echols Speaks to Buckhead Rotary
- McDonald on Capitol Hill
- Meanwhile in Georgia
- Announcements

SUPER BOWL LI

New England Patriots 34
Atlanta Falcons 28



So close, but when losing a bet, you pay the price. **Commissioner Lauren “Bubba” McDonald’s** price for losing was to wear a New England Patriots jersey at the NARUC annual meeting in February. His betting partner is Cheryl LaFleur, acting Chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). She was nice enough to wear the Falcons scarf for a photo but do we see a smirk?

COMMISSIONER CHUCK EATON ADDS TO THE FAMILY

Commissioner Chuck Eaton and his wife Erika currently have a five week old foster child named Lily. Their beautiful ten year old daughter Lydia has been such a big help with her.

SOLAR RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY IN PLAINS GEORGIA



Jamie Barber and former President Jimmy Carter

Jamie Barber and **John Kaduk** of the commission’s EERE group attended former President Jimmy Carter’s ribbon cutting ceremony for a solar panel project on farmland he owns in his hometown of Plains, Ga., Wednesday, February 8, 2017.

Carter leased 10 acres of his farmland to Atlanta-based SolAmerica Energy. The company estimates the project will provide more than half of the power needed in this town of 755 people.

“It shows what a small town can do, what one farmer can do,” said Carter. “It’s also a very good source of income for farmers who can get as much as \$500 per acre per year by allocating some of their land to solar panels.” Carter was also the first U.S. President to install solar panels at the White House.

COMMISSIONERS MEET WITH GEORGIA LEGISLATORS

Commissioners Doug Everett and Lauren “Bubba” McDonald hosted three Georgia legislators at the Commission offices on February 2, 2017 during the just completed legislative session to discuss biomass facilities in northeast and southeast Georgia. The Commissioners met with



Commissioner Everett, Senator Wilkerson, Commissioner McDonald, Chief of Staff Krause and Senator Ginn

Senator John Wilkerson of Toccoa, Senator Frank Ginn of Danielsville and Chief of Staff Tom Krause for Senator Bill Cowser of Athens.

SAINT PATRICKS DAY



Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald and wife Shelley participated in the Savannah St. Patrick's Day parade this year. McDonald is featured here with Shelley in his 1929 Model A car and donning his Irish kilt.

Commissioner Tim Echols participated in the parade while waving at the crowds in a "Little Red Corvette". Did you sing the Prince song when you read this?



Meanwhile, back on the Commission front, our wonderful **Quawanda Boyer, Administrative Assistant to the Utilities Director Tom Bond** provided the staff a feast of all things green. Everyone enjoyed the green beer (just kidding, it was flavored water), cookies, cakes, chips and fruit. She decorated her office to celebrate the occasion.

CLEAN ENERGY IN GEORGIA



Commissioner Tim Echols

On March 1st, the German Consulate General invited Georgia legislators and distinguished guests to the Georgia Railroad Depot for a dinner reception and presentation on "Clean Energy in Georgia—Jobs, Technology, National Security". Consul General Detlev Ruenger greeted the 150 guests who were treated to a German inspired buffet.



Commissioner Bubba McDonald and wife Shelley in attendance

Commissioner Echols used the evening's opportunity to highlight the benefits of Georgia's transition to becoming a leader in the electric vehicle marketplace.

COMMISSIONER TIM ECHOLS HOSTS ENERGY ASSISTANCE WORKSHOPS



Commissioner Echols hosted two Energy Assistance Workshops in DeKalb County and Clayton County for those case workers who provide assistance and advice to consumers who need help paying their utility bills. The workshop in DeKalb was held on March 9, 2017 and the Clayton County workshop was held on March 10, 2017.

CHAIRMAN STAN WISE PRESENTS



Commission Chairman Stan Wise spoke to a lunchtime gathering of the Technology Association of Georgia and the Southeastern Energy Society on March 20, 2017. He provided an update on recent Commission decisions and answered questions on his views on how the Trump Administration will affect environmental policies.

2017 GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADJOURNED SINE DIE FOR THE YEAR (CONTINUED FROM COVER PAGE)

However, a reduction in the state's income tax rate failed to gain final passage, as did a bill which would provide more regulation over hydraulic fracking. The Commission fared well in the FY 2018 state budget (H.B. 44). The lawmakers went along with the Governor in approving a 2 percent merit increase for state employees and teachers. Specifically for the Commission, the budget includes funding to hire an additional staff member for the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Section and additional funding for our NRRI dues

and research efforts. We appreciate our House and Senate Budget Committees for responding to the Commission's requests in these areas. The Governor has until May 10, 2017 to sign or veto bills or they will become law without his signature. He does have line item veto authority over the budget legislation.



CONSUMER AFFAIRS CORNER



L-R Karen Howell, Lisa Jensen, Claudette Willingham, Erica Wilson, Dona Cucich and Stephanie Sears

The Consumer Affairs (CA) Unit managed by **Claudette Willingham** takes complaints by telephone, e-mail, internet, letter and fax. They handle consumer issues concerning gas, telecom, wireless, electric, the internet and non-jurisdictional issues. If the CA Unit can't assist consumers with their issues, the staff will refer the consumer to an organization or agency that can. The CA handled over 17,232 calls in 2016. For a staff of six, that's a lot of calls!

COMMISSIONER EVERETT SEES THE NORTHERN LIGHTS AMONG OTHER ADVENTURES



Commissioner Doug Everett, his lovely wife Janice and son Mitch were able to check an item off their bucket list in March with a trip to Amsterdam Holland and Norway. In addition to seeing the spectacular light show, they spent time feeding reindeer, venturing on a snowmobile and went dog sledding to name a few. We all know he works hard and now we see he plays hard too.



A MESSAGE FROM HUMAN RESOURCES

With the I-85 bridge collapse on March 30th, the work commute has become a challenge for some of our staff. Below are URL addresses to websites for MARTA, Xpress, Gwinnett County Transit, and CobbLinc.

- <http://www.itsmarta.com/>
- <http://www.xpressga.com/>
- <https://www.gwinnettcountry.com/portal/gwinnett/Departments/Transportation/GwinnettCountyTransit>
- <http://www.atltransit.org/about/agencies/cobblinc/>



Cheryl Vinson, Human Resources

The website <http://gacommuteoptions.com> also offers resources for employees, including a means to find a ride match for carpooling and monetary incentives for alternative commuting.

COMMISSION AND LEGISLATIVE STAFF TOUR PLANT VOGTLE 3 & 4 CONSTRUCTION SITE ON APRIL 6TH



L-R Bill Edge, GPSC; Trey Bennett, Senate Research Office; Blake Doss, House Budget Office; Bethany Walker, GPSC

COMMISSIONER TIM ECHOLS SPEAKS TO BUCKHEAD ROTARY



Commissioner Tim Echols on April 10, 2017 gave the Buckhead Rotary Club an update on the progress of renewable energy sources in Georgia, as well as the situation on the construction project at Georgia Power’s Nuclear Power Plant Vogtle in southeast Georgia. Echols said Georgia continues to make progress in installing solar energy in Georgia. He also said the recent bankruptcy filing by Westinghouse, the contractor at the Plant Vogtle site, has severely affected the nuclear construction industry in the U.S.

COMMISSIONER LAUREN “BUBBA” MCDONALD ON CAPITOL HILL



Executive Committee: L-R (bottom row): Katrina McMurrin, Robert W. Capstick Jr., Julie Brown, Sarah Hoffman L-R (back row): Commissioner McDonald, David A. Wright

Commissioner McDonald met with other members of the executive committee of the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition (NWSC) in March to develop a strategy and action plan to advance the progress of nuclear waste management in the United States.

MEANWHILE IN GEORGIA

Commissioner Lauren “Bubba” McDonald initiated the passage of Senate Resolution 407 and House Resolution 482 which urge Georgia’s Congressional Delegation to enact legislation to re-establish a Nuclear Waste Program per the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NPWA) of 1982. The resolution will be delivered to Georgia’s representatives in the 115th Congress.

“Georgia electric ratepayers have contributed over \$1.6 billion to the Nuclear Waste Fund since 1982 with nothing to show for it,” said **Commissioner McDonald**. “The federal government through the Department of Energy has failed to meet the mandate of the NPWA to start accepting spent nuclear fuel in 1998.”

COMMISSION APPROVES THE FIFTEENTH SEMI-ANNUAL PLANT VOGTLE CONSTRUCTION MONITORING REPORT



The Commission on February 21, 2017 unanimously approve Georgia Power’s request to approve and verify \$141 million in expenditures on the Plant Vogtle Nuclear Power Construction Project for the period January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2016. The capital

costs so far is \$3.68 billion. This amount remains within the Commission certified construction cost. This decision is not a ruling on whether the expenditures are reasonable and prudent but only acknowledges that the Company has spent the funds on the project. “The Plant Vogtle project continues to make progress despite well publicized setbacks. I believe that in the long run this project, when completed, will provide reliable, stable and carbon free electricity for many generations of Georgians,” said **Commission Chairman Stan Wise**.

COMMISSION TAKES PART IN NARUC MEETING



L-R Janey Chavet, Alan Towe, Bill Edge, Tim Echols, Anthony Coker

Commissioners and staff attended the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Winter Committee Meetings in Washington, D.C. February 12-15, 2017. The four-day conference covered utility issues in energy, telecommunications, water, and consumer affairs.

Commissioners Tim Echols and Lauren

“Bubba” McDonald took part in panel discussions on nuclear waste disposal, utility rate design and consumer issues.

Continued on page 7

**HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY!**



15 YEARS

Tony Wackerly (6/1)
Natural Gas Unit

10 YEARS

Jeff Baggett (5/16)
Pipeline Safety Unit

Yolanda Clay (6/16)
GUFPA Unit

FAREWELL

Darryl Bailey
Pipeline Safety

Mikel Small
Pipeline Safety

**ADMINISTRATIVE
PROFESSIONALS
DAY**

April 26th

...recognizes and celebrates the work of administrative assistants and other office professionals for their contributions to the workplace.



COMMISSION TAKES PART IN NARUC MEETING

(continued from page 6)

Notable panels included a kickoff general session on February 13 featuring Greg Walden (R-Ore.), chair of the House *Energy and Commerce* Committee, who rolled out his agenda for the coming year. Also, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Acting Chair Cheryl LaFleur engaged in a Q&A session with NARUC President Robert Powelson on February 14, preceded by a talk from *Bill Shuster (R-Pa.)*, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, who outlined priorities for addressing infrastructure issues and transportation matters.



CONDOLENCES

Our heartfelt condolences to **Jamie Barber, Manager of EERE** and her family for the loss of her father, James (Joe) Summerville on April 7th after a lengthy illness.

WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEE

Max Stroev

Systems Administrator

Max joined us on April 17th transitioning from a contractor position in our Operations Support Unit to a permanent staff member in that Unit. He was born in Moscow, Russia and came to the U.S. in 1992. He lives here with his wife Jane of 16 years and two daughters, Sofie, age 15 and Paula, age 11. Max holds two undergraduate degrees, one from Russia in Civil Engineering and the other in Information Technology Systems from Georgia State University. We're glad you're here Max!



Charley Thebert with her 5th degree Black Belt instructor and 8th degree Black Belt founder

A big congratulations to **Charlotte (Charley) Thebert**. Charlotte is the 11 year old daughter of **Michelle Thebert – Director of Facilities Protection**. She received her Black Belt in Choi Kwang Do in March. She has been taking classes since she was three years old.

